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HUMAN RIGHTS QUESTIONS

Letter dated 19 July 1994 from the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 48/155 of 20 December 1993, I have the honour to transmit information on discrimination against the Russian-speaking population in Estonia and Latvia (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have the text of this letter and of its annex circulated as an official document of the General Assembly, under item 104 of the preliminary list.

(Signed) Y. VORONTSOV

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ANNEX

Discrimination against the Russian-speaking population in Estonia and Latvia

The discrimination against hundreds of thousands of non-indigenous inhabitants permanently resident in the territory of Estonia and Latvia, many of whom were born in these countries, is a result of the consistent policy pursued by the authorities in Estonia and Latvia which is in fact aimed at creating monoethnic States.

Estonia

Having by a decision of the Supreme Council of Estonia of 28 February 1992 entitled "Implementation of the Citizenship Act" deprived of Estonian citizenship about half a million ethnic Russians permanently resident in the territory of the Republic, the authorities have embarked according to plan on a gradual exclusion from the country of the Russian-speaking population. Setting aside the demagogic rhetoric of certain public figures in Estonia about restoring the "demographic balance" of the pre-war period, this amounts in practice to ethnic cleansing.

Under the terms of the above-mentioned decision, persons who held Estonian citizenship as at 16 June 1940 are recognized as Estonian citizens. All others are treated as aliens to whom citizenship may be granted only through naturalization.

Certain categories of non-Estonians cannot acquire citizenship at all: former officials of the security and investigatory organs of the USSR, persons convicted of serious crimes against the person or sentenced more than once under criminal law for international crimes and, lastly, those with no permanent legal income.

Counting of the period of residence required for the acquisition of citizenship begins from 30 March 1990, regardless of the length of time the person had been resident in Estonia prior to that date. Moreover, those wishing to acquire Estonian citizenship must take an oath of loyalty and pass an examination in Estonian (the State language) and Estonian history. In practice, these examinations may be transformed into an insuperable barrier, although without formally violating the letter of the law.

In accordance with article 7 of the decision of the Supreme Council of Estonia of 28 February 1992, in February 1993 the country's Parliament adopted the Act entitled "Requirements regarding knowledge of the Estonian language by persons applying for Estonian citizenship".

This extremely important normative instrument, published in the press after its confirmation by the President of the Republic, specifies both the criteria of linguistic knowledge and the categories of persons to whom "special conditions" for taking the State examinations may apply. In particular, the Government has the right "to establish special rules for the taking of the

language examinations by persons born before 1 January 1930 and also by group 1 invalids and those group 2 invalids who have been permanently classified as such and whose health does not permit them to take the examination in the normal manner".

The authorities in Tallinn are presenting the adoption of this Act as "a decisive step forward in the establishment of a dialogue on an equal footing between Estonians and the non-indigenous population of the Republic". Essentially, however, it is a cosmetic change which in fact does little to facilitate the procedure for acquisition of Estonian citizenship even by those categories of persons who because of their advanced age or state of health can scarcely expect to have an active command of the Estonian language. Instead of heeding the voice of the world community, which has more than once raised in various forums the issue of guaranteeing the legal rights and interest of the Russian-speaking inhabitants, the authorities in Estonia are resorting to various types of subterfuges in order to cover up the existing serious violations of universally accepted international standards in this sphere.

Under the circumstances, when the necessary foundations have not been laid for study of the Estonian language by non-indigenous inhabitants, the issue of acquiring Estonian citizenship remains unresolved for the vast majority of ethnic Russians permanently resident in the Republic.

Nor has the approval by the Estonian Parliament of a bill amending the decision of 28 February 1992 on the implementation of the Citizenship Act led to any essential change in the situation. The new legislation establishes a simplified procedure for the acquisition of citizenship (exemption from taking the Estonian language examinations) for those permanent residents of the country who submitted their application for Estonian citizenship before the elections to the Estonian Congress, i.e. before 24 February 1994, thereby doing away with the requirement of knowledge of Estonian provided for in article 6, paragraph 3 of the Estonian Citizenship Act. The amendment adopted is extremely limited in scope and covers a very small group of the persons who potentially have the right to claim citizenship. In essence, it relates to some 30,000 people, principally ethnic Estonians who are not citizens of the Estonian Republic by birth.

Thus the issue of acquisition of citizenship remains unresolved for the vast majority of Estonia's non-indigenous population. The proclamation of a third of the country's permanent population as aliens or stateless persons is a direct violation of the fundamental principles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (articles 6 and 15; article 25 (c)) and of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

Under the terms of the Constitution of Estonia, non-citizens may have limitations placed on the exercise of their right freely to disseminate ideas, opinions, convictions and other information and to hold meetings without prior authorization. They are also deprived of the right to form political parties.

With the adoption of the Local Government Elections Act and the Aliens Act, those ethnic Russians permanently resident in the Republic who previously, on the basis of the relevant legislation, were deprived of the opportunity to

acquire Estonian citizenship are now deprived as well of the right to be elected to the organs of local government even in those regions where they constitute an absolute majority of the population. (For example, in the towns of Narva and Sillamäe in the industrial north-east, Russian speakers account for about 95 per cent of the population.) Moreover, half a million permanent residents of the Republic have de facto been proclaimed as some kind of illegal immigrants. They are deprived of the right to freedom of movement and employment, and in some cases many of them may be expelled from the country. Even obtaining a residence permit involves surmounting countless bureaucratic formalities and submitting various types of forms, including certificates confirming the results of analyses for AIDS and syphilis.

There are grounds for serious concern in the official statements by senior officials in the Estonian Department of Citizenship and Migration to the effect that persons permanently resident in the Republic before July 1990 under the former Soviet registration system will receive not a temporary, but a fixed-term, residence permit. This terminological casuistry fails to conceal the underlying political realities, which involve on the one hand creating an appropriate legal basis for mass deportation of the Russian-speaking population from the Republic and on the other hand causing direct economic harm to people who have been working on Estonian soil for decades, for example by depriving them of the right to privatize their housing.

There are substantial restrictions on the social and economic rights of the Russian-speaking population of the Republic. Under the Land Reform Act, privatization of land extends only to citizens of Estonia. The failure to take into account periods of employment outside Estonia has an impact on the privatization of housing and the calculation of pensions, in respect of which no account whatsoever is taken of service in the ranks of the Soviet Army.

There are still restrictions on the right of non-citizens to work as officials in State institutions, the courts, arbitration tribunals, the procurator's office, notaries' offices, the police and the customs service. The certification of knowledge of the State language inevitably leads to mass unemployment among ethnic Russians, and the result is a vicious circle: an unemployed foreigner or stateless person, having no legal source of income, cannot under the legislation in force in Estonia apply for citizenship, and a non-citizen has no right to assistance from the State in obtaining employment.

The high housing costs and the overall high cost of living have an impact on the socially most vulnerable sectors of society - the unemployed and pensioners receiving meagre allowances.

Retired military personnel (of whom there are about 10,500 in the Republic, or together with their family members more than 40,000 people) have proved to be in the most difficult situation. The Tallinn authorities refuse to issue these people even with residence permits, stating that they are a threat to the security of the State. In fact, however, 80 per cent of military pensioners are people aged over 60 who simply have nowhere to go. Moreover, they do not constitute an economic burden on the Republic, since they receive their pensions from the Ministry of Defence of the Russian Federation.

At the same time, attempts are being made at the local government level to nullify the entire basis, including registration, for residence in the territory of the Republic by Russian military personnel and the staff of organizations of the Ministry of Defence of the Russian Federation, Russian military pensioners and their family members. The authorities in Tallinn and Tartu have already taken the decision to use the police to evict these people from the apartments they occupy.

Alongside the restrictions placed on the Russian-speaking population in the political and socio-economic spheres, one of the means of discriminating against members of the non-indigenous nationality is drastic limitation of the rights of the Russian-speaking population of Estonia in the field of education, culture and information. Legal embodiment has already been given to this discriminatory practice: the Language Act, the National Minorities Cultural Autonomy Act, the National Education Act and the Intermediate Schools and High Schools Act and the associated legal instruments all to varying degrees impose additional restrictions on the non-indigenous population of the country.

The National Minorities Cultural Autonomy Act approved by the State Assembly of Estonia on 26 October 1993 provides that only citizens of the Republic may participate in elections for or be elected or appointed to membership of the governing bodies of the institutions of cultural self-government. According to article 6 of this Act, aliens may only "take part in the activity of national minority cultural institutions, educational establishments and religious movements".

Moreover, the very fact of recognition as a national minority requires organizational legalization: "The basis for application for cultural autonomy of a national minority is the national list of the national minority" (Art. 7 (1)).

Under the terms of this normative instrument, the Estonian Government delegates to the national minority the organization of mother-tongue education, the establishment of the minority's cultural institutions and the establishment of funds to provide grants and awards for purposes of the development of culture and education (Art. 5 of the Act).

The threat of a decline in the overall educational level of young people belonging to the non-indigenous population is becoming very real. In September 1993 the National Education Act and the Intermediate Schools and High Schools Act were approved. According to the latter Act, the State guarantees mother-tongue education in the primary and intermediate schools, i.e. from grades 1 to 9. Secondary (or high-school) education in the State schools will be provided only in the State language. To this end, over the period 1993-2000 a transition to Estonian as a language of instruction will take place, and by the beginning of the third millennium there will no longer be any high schools in the Republic providing full secondary education in Russian.

Under the present circumstances, with no system in place for training specialists to teach subjects in Estonian in Russian schools, not one of the existing Russian schools will be able to qualify for full legal status as a high school. Moreover, the introduction of teaching of chemistry, physics and

natural sciences in Estonian will mean that students will not know the Russian scientific and technical terminology, which will then preclude them from entering Russian institutions of higher education, and few of them will be able to compete with Estonian secondary school graduates in entrance examinations. Already this year there has been a decrease in the number of graduates from Russian secondary schools, and this will in turn mean a reduction in the numbers entering specialized secondary educational institutions and trade schools, and consequently in the number of instructors at them.

Even if they successfully pass the Estonian language examinations, the majority of teachers are not in a position to switch to teaching their subject in a foreign language. There is every ground for assuming that the basic criterion for professional evaluation of teachers in Russian-language educational institutions will be reduced to a single requirement - knowledge of the Estonian language - and this will unquestionably introduce a certain dissonance into the rating system of teacher training colleges.

The transition to teaching subjects in school in Estonian is being transformed into a means of eliminating teaching in Russian. Few specialists capable of teaching their subjects in Estonian go to the Russian schools: there is considerably more work (as a rule, the Russian-language schools are overloaded, and teaching is often conducted in three shifts), and the remuneration is not commensurate with the workload. A negative trend is apparent towards reduction in the general educational level of Estonian language teachers in Russian schools: at the beginning of the 1993-1994 school year, there were 499 teachers of Estonian in the Russian schools, of whom only 40 per cent had received specialized higher teacher training, 13 per cent had only general secondary education, and the remainder - almost 47 per cent - had a university education, but in another field.

The "Estonianization" of curricula in the Russian-language schools gives cause for serious concern. For a number of years now, Russian history has been completely excluded as an independent discipline, and is taught only in the world history course.

Schools in Estonia today are working only on the basis of their own humanities textbooks, written and specially translated for the non-Estonian schools by Estonian authors. Among the recommended textbooks of this kind in the Russian schools is one, which counts among its authors the current Prime Minister of Estonia, Mart Laar, entitled "Essays in the history of the Estonian people"; by means of unprincipled silence or gross falsification of major historical events, this book depicts Russia as a barbarian country and Estonia as an outpost of European civilization confronting Eastern barbarism. And this is a matter not of tendentious hypotheses which call for dispassionate scientific assessment, but of the establishment of a deliberate state position the essence of which was set forth by the President of Estonia, Lennart Meri, in his lecture for "Europeans abroad" - the establishment of a sanitary cordon between the West and the barbarians, with Estonia, now and in the future, serving as its bridgehead.

The unimpeded propagation of this idea of a special Estonian "vanguard", which is deforming not only the schools but the entire sphere of information and

culture, is to a considerable extent facilitating the growing isolation of ethnic Russians as far as information is concerned.

Since April 1993 the rebroadcasting in Estonia of the Russian radio programme "Mayak", as well as of the St. Petersburg and Russian television programmes, has been discontinued.

From the beginning of 1994 the television programme "Ostankino" was broadcast only at the time of the news transmissions, and since 28 March it has been completely discontinued on grounds of non-payment. Once the issue of financing the transmission of "Ostankino" had been resolved, the Estonian authorities put forward a new and manifestly contrived pretext - that Russian-language broadcasts without simultaneous translation into Estonian, which was impossible in practice for purely technical reasons, contravened the State Language Act. And yet this same Act does not prevent the appearance on Estonian screens of four daily television programmes from Finland, one of them in Swedish.

The state of the periodical press obviously affords the most striking evidence of the information blockade against ethnic Russians that has been artificially created in the Republic. Only two Russian-language publications published outside Estonia can be bought at the newsstands: "The Week in Review" of The New York Times and "Moskovskie Novosti". There has been a sharp increase in the price of subscriptions to newspapers and journals published in the Russian Federation.

Collections of books in Russian are being closed down. For example, practically all Russian-language editions have been removed from the central library in Tallinn.

A catastrophic situation has emerged in connection with the financing of Russian culture in Estonia. Of the 11 state theatres, only one is Russian. In terms of the number of groups of creative artists, there are 10 to 15 times as many Estonian as Russian ones. In Tallinn, with a Russian population of not less than 200,000, there remains not a single cultural educational institution whose language of instruction is Russian. The budgets of Tallinn, Tartu, Pärnu and other towns and districts make no provision whatsoever for the financing of Russian culture.

Another matter for deep concern is the violation of the right of the Russian-speaking inhabitants of Estonia to freedom of religion. After the Ministry of Internal Affairs had refused to register the Estonian Orthodox Church, which owes allegiance to the Patriarch of Moscow, and accorded legal recognition to the congregation administered by the Synod of the Estonian Apostolic Church, located in Stockholm, the Estonian Orthodox Church lost the right not only to its property, including the church buildings, but also to carry on its activity.

It must regrettably be noted that Estonia's admission to such an authoritative international organization as the Council of Europe has not led to a change in the position of the Tallinn authorities regarding the Russian-speaking population of the Republic. Indeed, the Estonian authorities have

taken the country's admission to the Council of Europe as licence to continue their policy of establishing a monoethnic State.

Latvia

Until recently, Latvia was the only State-Republic of the former USSR that had not adopted an act on citizenship. On 21 June 1994, the Latvian Saeima (Parliament) adopted this most important normative instrument (the first reading took place at the end of November 1993, the second on 9 June 1994).

The act clearly discriminates against the Russian-speaking population of Latvia and is imbued with undisguised national protectionism. Thus, ethnic Latvians, Livonians (members of a small nationality that resided legally in Latvia until 1940 but did not have Latvian citizenship), spouses of citizens (if they have been married for at least 10 years), children one of whose parents is an ethnic Latvian or a Livonian, and people who were brought to Latvia by force during the Nazi occupation will be granted citizenship out of turn. This group of "first-in-liners" also includes Lithuanians and Estonians who have permanent residence in Latvia. To all appearances, the preference that those nationalities receive over Russians, Belarusians or Poles can be explained only by the desire of Latvian parliamentarians to promote "Baltic unity".

The above-mentioned categories of persons do not obtain citizenship automatically. They are subject to a 10-year residence requirement and must also pass an examination on the Latvian Constitution, the history of the country and the Latvian language. In addition, people applying for Latvian citizenship must have a legal source of income.

Beginning in 1996, applications for citizenship may be made by persons who were born in Latvia, but in the following order according to age: from ages 16 to 20, 21 to 25, 26 to 30, followed by people over 30. The latter will be able to apply for Latvian citizenship no earlier than the year 2000. In accordance with the quotas set out in the act, citizenship may be granted to 0.1 per cent of the number of citizens in the previous year, which is equivalent to approximately 2,000 people a year. Thus, about 500,000 permanent residents of the Republic will be stateless at least until the beginning of the next millennium, and the acquisition of Latvian citizenship by ethnic Russians will drag on for a great number, perhaps dozens, of years. According to expert calculations, only 230,000 out of the 830,000 non-citizens can count on acquiring citizenship by the year 2000; of those, only 85,000 will be granted citizenship before 1 January 1996.

The act also contains limitations on naturalization. Applications for Latvian citizenship cannot be made by persons "who opposed the independence of the Republic of Latvia or the existing State power in Latvia, who after 4 May 1990 disseminated fascist, chauvinist, national-socialist, communist or other totalitarian ideas, or by ex-servicemen of the Armed Forces of the USSR (Russia) who after demobilization chose Latvia as their place of residence and who at the time of their call-up to military service had not been permanent residents of Latvia" (art. 11).

The adoption of the Citizenship Act in its current form in fact creates the necessary legal basis for the possible future deportation of non-citizens, who now number more than 700,000, or over one third of the permanent residents of the Republic; Russians account for about 62 per cent of non-citizens. The Committee of Senior Officials of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) has already expressed its concern at these developments and, at its latest session, called upon Latvia to reconsider its Citizenship Act.

On 22 June 1994, the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Latvia called upon the President to submit the Citizenship Act to Parliament for reconsideration. In the opinion of the members of the Government, the annual quota system will complicate Latvia's admission to the Council of Europe and will hamper its integration into the European Union and closer ties with the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO).

A number of European countries (Sweden, Germany, France, Austria, Estonia) have already expressed their opposition to the introduction of naturalization quotas. Representatives of the Council of Europe, CSCE and the Committee of Ministers of the European Union have voiced their concern over a number of provisions of the Act. However, even if the quota system, which is opposed in particular by representatives of major international organizations and leading European countries, is abandoned when the Act is reconsidered, the rate of naturalization, in the opinion of many experts, will not change in so far as the process of granting citizenship is in the hands of bureaucrats in the executive branch.

One gets the impression that, since the very first days of Latvia's existence as a sovereign State, the leaders of the Republic have endeavoured to create a political, socio-economic and cultural environment that would induce the Russian-speaking population to leave the country. This goal is reflected in most of the normative acts that the Republic of Latvia has adopted since 1991 (Act on Elections to Central and Local Government Bodies, Civil Service Act, Election Campaign Act, Language Act, and addenda to the Act on the Entry and Stay of Aliens and the Police Act).

The decision of 15 October 1991 of the Supreme Council of the Republic of Latvia, entitled "Restoration of the rights of citizens of the Latvian Republic and basic conditions for naturalization" in fact granted Latvian citizenship only to those who possessed such citizenship as at 17 June 1940, and to their descendants.

The overwhelming majority of the Russian-speaking population that did not receive Latvian citizenship was not allowed to participate in elections and was deprived of the right to acquire property; its rights to participate in privatization and establish joint-stock companies, as well as its right to hold government office, were considerably curtailed.

The Act on the Entry and Stay of Aliens and Persons without Citizenship in the Republic of Latvia of 9 June 1992 left thousands of permanent residents of Latvia, who had settled in that country after the Second World War, in the position of "illegal immigrants".

The decision of the Supreme Council of Latvia of 28 April 1993, entitled "Issuance of temporary residence permits to persons whose presence in Latvia is occasioned by the temporary stationing in its territory of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation", substantially restricts the right of this considerable segment of the Russian-speaking population to freedom of residence.

According to that decision, all persons who are in any way associated with the Armed Forces of the former USSR are classed as aliens and persons without citizenship. Moreover, that category includes not only military personnel who entered Latvia after 4 May 1993, but also their spouses (including former spouses), children (including adult children), dependants and other blood relatives. By conferring the status of military personnel of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation on adult children, dependants and other blood relatives, the decision forces them to leave Latvia, regardless of their intentions or long-standing ties, including family ties, with the country of residence. This violates one of the universally recognized norms of international law: the right to freedom of residence (art. 13, para. 1, of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights).

After Latvia introduced, on 22 March 1993, the visa requirement for entry into its territory, one of the methods of discriminating against the Republic's Russian-speaking population became the unjustified refusal to issue a re-entry visa, for which a fee is charged.

The logical continuation of this national policy was the Latvian Parliament's adoption of the Local Government Elections Act. According to that Act, non-citizens are deprived not only of passive but also active suffrage; language restrictions are imposed even on persons of non-indigenous nationality who are citizens (only persons who have passed the examination in Latvian at the highest level can run for office). During the last elections, one third of the country's adult population - Russian or Russian-speaking - was deprived of the right to vote for candidates in local government elections. Artificial barriers (in practice, on the basis of nationality) are erected to the nomination of candidates in Riga and other major cities with a high non-indigenous population.

In keeping with the Residents Registration Act, a systematic campaign is being waged to reclassify ethnic Russians as a category of the population that is completely without rights. Persons not included in the Residents Register in the normal manner are deprived of the right to receive children's allowances and unemployment benefits, the right to free medical care for children, the right to receive privatization certificates, the right to invite relatives from abroad, the right to receive tax books (which prevents them from receiving tax concessions and seeking lawful employment), and the right to leave and enter the country freely.

This category includes many people who were born in Latvia and people who have lived in that country for as long as they can remember, and also those who during the Nazi occupation were forcibly transported - not without the participation of the local SS - to Latvia. According to information provided by the Director of the Department of Citizenship and Immigration of the Republic of Latvia, Mr. I. Zitars, about 136,000 people were refused registration in the

normal manner; however, the Latvian Human Rights Committee considers that figure to be actually in the neighbourhood of 160,000.

People whose period of residence has been artificially reduced for contrived reasons (for example, temporary travel outside Latvia or work as civilian employees in military units) lose their right to receive privatization certificates and, as a result, are unable to privatize their homes, which means that they could eventually find themselves on the street. Since the issuance of certificates to non-citizens is just beginning, the number of people in this category has not yet been established but, in the opinion of the Latvian Human Rights Committee, hundreds of thousands of people - perhaps the majority of non-citizens - are affected.

It should also be noted that registration forms are filled out only in Latvian and a considerable number of registered persons are simply unable to verify the information included in such documents.

In the context of economic reforms, the rights of the Russian-speaking population are deliberately and consistently violated. The Russian-speaking population cannot count on its share of the State property that it actively helped to create. In all instances, that segment of the population is the first to be laid off from work and the last to be hired. Non-citizens are restricted in their social rights and are frequently denied social allowances, unemployment benefits, and so on. Their social pensions are equivalent to 90 per cent of the pensions of citizens, and their rights to obtain and acquire housing, their right to self-defence, as well as other rights, have been restricted.

The leaders of Latvia are conducting a deliberate policy aimed at destroying the cultural life of the Russian-speaking population. Every year it becomes more difficult to receive higher - and even secondary - education in Russian, read the Russian press and watch and listen to television and radio broadcasts from the Russian Federation. From the second year onward, higher education may be continued only in the State language; the number of Russian secondary schools is decreasing, and aid to cultural institutions has been reduced to a minimum. In the final analysis, all this leads to the loss of the national culture of non-Latvians who, as a result, are assimilated into the general mass of the Republic's indigenous population.

The fomentation of animosity towards immigrants from Russia, which has become a State policy, is making relations difficult. Local executive bodies often adopt an arbitrary approach to the enforcement of legislation, thus increasing its discriminatory nature. In everyday life, ethnic Russians are increasingly encountering intolerance, aggressive nationalism and xenophobia based on their ethnic origin.

Because of this policy towards Latvia's Russian-speaking population, 60,000 people were forced to leave the Republic in 1992-1993.

Such developments in Latvia and Estonia were a direct consequence of the implementation of doctrines aimed at creating monoethnic States. Estonia and Latvia have deliberately ignored and continue to ignore basic human rights instruments, the opinion of international experts and the recommendations of the

CSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities and the Council of Europe, and appeals from a number of neighbouring States.

Insufficient attention on the part of the international community and the "neutrality" of some States is contrary to the universally recognized conclusion that adequate guarantees of the rights of national minorities are, given the current state of affairs, a key element in the maintenance of regional and international stability. The diplomatic turning of a "blind eye" to the infringement of the rights of hundreds of thousands of people in Latvia and Estonia is, in the current circumstances, a return to the well-known practice of "double standards".

Our heightened attention to this problem is not a relapse into "neo-imperialist" thinking but an expression of genuine concern about the fate of democracy in Estonia and Latvia, and for that matter in Russia itself, an attempt to find a practical solution to the question, rather than theorize about the problem until a crisis occurs. For its part, the Russian Federation, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 48/155, entitled "Situation of human rights in Estonia and Latvia", and in the light of the continuing deterioration of the human rights situation, will persist in drawing the attention of the international community to the situation of ethnic Russians in these Baltic States.

Today in the Baltic States, the effectiveness of international instruments in the field of human rights and the protection of national minorities is being put to the test.

The discriminatory policies and practices of these States vis-à-vis the Russian-speaking population, which have already been consolidated in their domestic legislation, are contrary to the basic principles of the United Nations, violate the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the Convention concerning Employment Policy and other international legal instruments. We believe that this situation should continue to be considered by the United Nations.

Conditions for blatant discrimination against a considerable part of the population of States and the creation of new hotbeds of tension and conflict situations must not be allowed to be established in Europe.

Obviously, additional international efforts are needed to encourage Estonia and Latvia to comply fully and conscientiously with the obligations that they assumed under bilateral and international agreements in the field of human rights and freedoms.